MARVEL
54
DARK REIGN
THE NEW AVENGERS
BENDIS
TAN
BATT
TAN
BAIT
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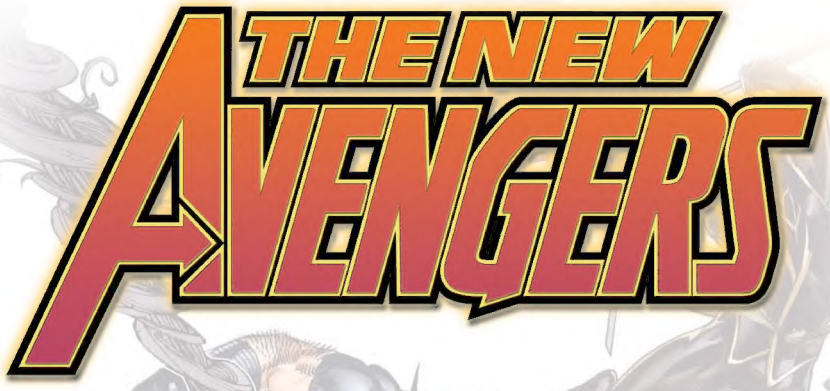
And there came a day, a day unlike any other, when Earth's Mightiest Heroes found themselves united against a common threat! On that day, the Avengers were born, to fight the foes no single super hero could withstand!



The Avengers are on the run. Until they can be sure who's on their side, they're using Captain America's hideout in Brooklyn as a safe house. Collectively they try to keep the values of the Avengers name alive even though they're living on the wrong side of the law.

Norman Osborn is the new political and media darling, and is now running H.A.M.M.E.R., the national peacekeeping task force, which includes his own team of Avengers. Unable to stand it, Clint Barton, aka Ronin, finally took matters into his own hands and went on national television to out Osborn as the former villain called the Green Goblin.

But something far worse is stirring, only it's not on this mortal plane. Some time ago, the Sorcerer Supreme, Doctor Stephen Strange, lost his mastery of the mystic arts when he used dark powers to save the Avengers. Now he's on a mission to find his replacement, the new Sorcerer Supreme, before the Dormammu-possessed criminal kingpin the Hood finds him first.

Strange, along with the Avengers, follow the Eye of Agamotto to New Orleans where the Hood is engaged in battle with the Son of Satan, Daimon Hellstrom…before it disappears before their eyes. But if Daimon isn't the new Sorcerer Supreme, who is?

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NEW ORLEANS. TEN MINUTES AGO.
YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE, JERICHO. YOU DON'T EVEN LIKE HER.
BE QUIET, DANIEL.
YOU WERE ALWAYS LIKE THIS. IT DRIVES ME CRAZY.
TRY HAVING YOUR DEAD BROTHER'S VOICE IN YOUR HEAD ALL DAY. THAT-- THAT WILL DRIVE YOU CRAZY.
YOU SHOULD LISTEN TO ME INSTEAD OF--
YOU SHOULD BE OUT HELPING PEOPLE. YOU SHOULD BE OUT CHANGING THE WORLD.
YOU ARE! YOU'RE DRIVING ME INSANE.
YES, BUT I'M ALLOWED A LITTLE TIME TO MYSELF.
THIS ISN'T THE REASON WHY YOU WERE GIVEN THE POWER OF THE LOA.
STOP.
THE SPIRIT-GODS OF VOODOO WILL FROWN ON YOUR--
AND NAGGING AT ME ISN'T THE REASON YOU'RE ALLOWED TO FOLLOW ME AROUND FROM DA SPIRIT WORLD.
THE GIFT YOU-- UH...
JERICHO DRUMM. YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN.
WHAT IS THIS?
I DON'T KNOW.
THE EYE-- IT'S--IT'S DOCTOR STRANGE'S EYE OF AGAMOTTO.

I AM THE ANCIENT ONE.

I WAS THE ONE WHO PASSED DOWN TO STEPHEN STRANGE THE MANTLE OF SORCERER SUPREME...

I AM THE ONE WHO TRAINED HIM TO BE THE MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS IN THIS DIMENSION...

THE MANTLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES WEIGH HEAVY ON THOSE WHO WOULD CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT.

THIS I KNOW ALL TOO WELL.

AND WITH THE MODERN WORLD CHANGING SO QUICKLY SO OFTEN, IT MAY HAVE BEEN INEVITABLE THAT STEPHEN WOULD BE FORCED TO MAKE CHOICES THAT HE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO LIVE WITH FOR LONG.

CHOICES THAT AT THE TIME SAVED LIVES AND HELPED FRIENDSHIPS, BUT CHOICES THAT NONETHELESS HAD POWERFUL REPERCUSSIONS ON HIMSELF AND HIS MASTERY.

BECAUSE OF THIS, STEPHEN STRANGE HAS CHOSEN TO LET GO OF HIS CHORES AND PASS THEM ON..

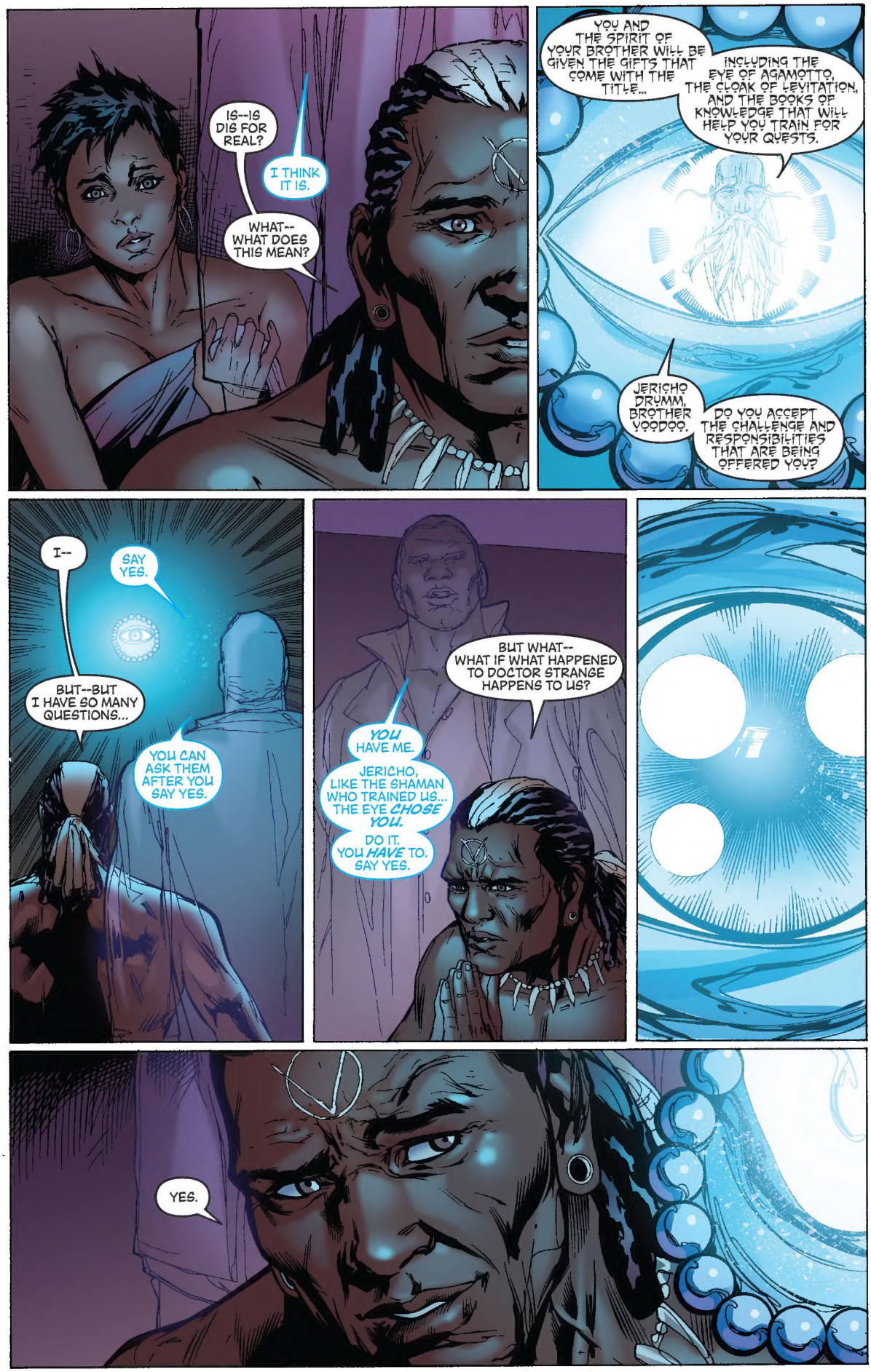
OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITHIN THE WORLDS OF MYSTICISM...

OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DEDICATED THEIR LIVES TO STUDYING SORCERY...

THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO HAS SHOWN THAT YOURS IS THE SOUL MOST DESERVING AND READY TO TAKE ON THE MANTLE OF SORCERER SUPREME.

THE ALL-SEEING, ALL-KNOWING EYE OF INFINITY...

...CHOSE YOU.


IS--IS DIS FOR REAL?
I THINK IT IS.
WHAT-- WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
YOU AND THE SPIRIT OF YOUR BROTHER WILL BE GIVEN THE GIFTS THAT COME WITH THE TITLE...
INCLUDING THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO, THE CLOAK OF LEVITATION, AND THE BOOKS OF KNOWLEDGE THAT WILL HELP YOU TRAIN FOR YOUR QUESTS.
JERICHO DRUMM, BROTHER VOODOO.
DO YOU ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE AND RESPONSIBILITIES THAT ARE BEING OFFERED YOU?
I--
SAY YES.
BUT--BUT I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS...
YOU CAN ASK THEM AFTER YOU SAY YES.
BUT WHAT-- WHAT IF WHAT HAPPENED TO DOCTOR STRANGE HAPPENS TO US?
YOU HAVE ME.
JERICHO, LIKE THE SHAMAN WHO TRAINED US... THE EYE CHOSE YOU.
DO IT. YOU HAVE TO. SAY YES.
YES.

WHAT NOW?
I DON'T KNOW.
IS DOCTOR STRANGE DEAD?
NOW YOU ASK?
WHY DIDN'T YOU ASK WHEN THE ANCIENT ONE WAS HERE? HE WAS *RIGHT HERE.*
HE WAS TALKING TO YOU.
YOU WERE TALKING THE WHOLE TIME.
STOP.
WE'RE THE SORCERER SUPREME.
YEAH? AND *NOW* WHAT?
WELL, ONE WOULD IMAGINE THERE WILL BE A SIGN.
WHAT KIND OF SIGN?
LIKE A TEST, A-- A TRIAL BY FIRE.
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
BECAUSE I KNOW. WE BOTH KNOW.
THESE THINGS DON'T JUST GET HANDED OVER. YOU HAVE TO *EARN* THEM.
TRIAL BY--
WHAT IS IT?
YAAGGH!
BOOOM
TOLD YOU.
THAT'S LUKE CAGE.
AND HE NEEDS YOUR HELP.
TRIAL BY FIRE.
PUT IT ON.

NOW.

SERIOUSLY... WHAT DA HELL IS WRONG WIT' YOU PEOPLE?

THE EYE!

ARE YOU READY?

READY.

FOCUS OUR POWER.

SMAK

RRR...

THWAP

THWAP

WHAT IS IT?

I THINK IT'S THE--

AVENGERS!
NEW ORLEANS... EVERYONE ELSE WHO COMES HERE GETS BEADS, WE GET THIS CRAP.
SPLIT UP. TAKE FORMATION.
WE HAVE A FORMATION?
I GUESS WE HAVE A FORMATION.
PARKER!
PUT A SOCK IN IT, YOU!
SPANG
HUURR!
OH, LOOK AT YOU, ALL BURNING FLESH AND PUSS...
IT'S LIKE YOU READ MY DIARY.
WHOOM
JERICHO!
STRANGE! HOLD UP A DEFENSE SPELL ON ME!
KEEP ME COVERED WHILE I DO THIS.
HELLSTROM, WHAT ARE YOU-- OH!

PAYBACK.
SSLICEE
RAARRG!
ZZAAAT
FWOOOSHH
WOOP!
TANG
HAA!!
FUMP

GET READY.

WHAT IS HE EXACTLY?

BAM!

HEY, VOODOO!

HURRY! ITS FLESH IS MELTING AWAY. THE DEMON IS GAINING ACCESS!

YEAH YEAH...

JERICHO!

COME HERE!

BEHIND ME!

HOW ARE YOU FEELING, JERICHO?

I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS.

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT.

HUUAARRGH!

SHOULD I RUN?

JUST STAND BEHIND ME.

HURAGH!

DEMON, YOU WILL NOT TAKE WHAT IS NOT YOURS!

YOU WILL REVEAL YOURSELF!

AGRGH!!
A DEMONIC POSSESSION?
WORSE THAN I HAVE EVER SEEN.
AND WE'VE SEEN SOME.
THE EYE!
AAGGH!
WELL, DAMN.
WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?
I THINK THEY TRAPPED HIM.

GOT YOU! YOU DUMB SON OF A---!
HELLSTROM, BEGONE WITH YOU OR FACE MY--
YEAH, YEAH... SUCK IT, CHIMP.
DORMAMMU!
DOCTOR...

AVENGERS, STAY BACK!
I CAN SLICE HIM RIGHT DOWN THE--
NO! DON'T GO NEAR THE SEAL!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
ANYONE WANT A COKE OR SOMETHING? I THINK I SAW A 7-11.

SETTLE DOWN IN THERE, BIG GUY. WE GOT YOU AND WE'RE SENDING YOU BACK.
I CAN PERFORM AN EXORCISM.
GOOD. WE'LL ALL DO IT. TAKE A SIDE.

THE GREAT DOCTOR STRANGE... IN ALL MY YEARS-- TO SEE YOU SO DEFEATED.
IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS.
AND WE HAVE YOU IN A CAGE.
HURAGH!
CUT IT OUT!
GAGNINA SULATI.
WHOA! WHAT LANGUAGE IS THAT?
GAGNINA SULATI GUTHATI.
GAGNINA SULATI GUTHATI IRITINI.
GAGNINA SULATI GUTHATI IRITINI DORMAMMU SULANTI.
MMMiiiNNEE!
GET READY IF THIS DON'T WORK.
I'M ALREADY PEEING.

HAAGGHH!
NOOOOO!
JEEZ!
FRASHOOM

WHO IS THAT?

THAT IS PARKER ROBBINS.

THEY USED TO CALL HIM THE HOOD.

NO MORE HOOD.

OH, PARKER...

OH NO...

YEAH, BOOHOO.

WELL DONE.

I'M NOT SURE WHAT JUST HAPPENED HERE.

YOU HELPED PROTECT THE EYE AND VANQUISH HE WHO WOULD TAKE IT FROM YOU.

IS THIS ALL REALLY HAPPENING?

I'M VERY GLAD IT WAS YOU THAT WAS CHOSEN.

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

AND HOW WILL I DO THAT?

YOU'LL START YOUR TRAINING.

I'LL TRAIN YOU.

CAN WE DO IT SOMEWHERE WHERE A HUNDRED PEOPLE AREN'T WATCHING?

OH YES, LET'S EVERYBODY PAT EACH OTHER ON THE TUSH FOR A JOB WELL DONE.

IT *WASN'T*... A JOB WELL DONE?

MAN, LOOK AROUND YOU...

THIS IS THE END OF DAYS.

ALL THAT MADNESS YOU GUYS ARE INVOLVED IN EVERY SINGLE SECOND OF EVERY SINGLE DAY.

IT WEAKENS THE BARRIERS BETWEEN *THIS* DIMENSION AND THE ONES THAT WOULD KEEP AN A-HOLE LIKE DORMAMMU AWAY FROM US.

A THING LIKE *THAT* CAN GET IN OUR WORLD WITH A PIECE OF *FELT*?

THAT IS *BAD*.

LOOK AT YOUR CALENDARS, LOOK AT THE WORLD.

THERE IS A RECKONING COMING, AND THE ONLY ONE HOLDING IT ALL TOGETHER WAS HIM, AND HE QUIT.

SO YOU BETTER BE READY THERE, BROTHER VOODOO...

YOU BETTER BE READY TO LEAD THE CHARGE AGAINST THE HORDES OF UNHOLY $%#% THAT ARE COMING TO TAKE ALL THIS AWAY.

BECAUSE IT'S COMING.

YOU...

SHOULD WRITE GREETING CARDS.

REALLY.

AND YOU BETTER BE READY TO PAY FOR ALL YOUR SINS.

ALRIGHTY THEN.

JUST SO YOU KNOW THIS-- I'LL KILL YOU ALL.

YEAH, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH HER?

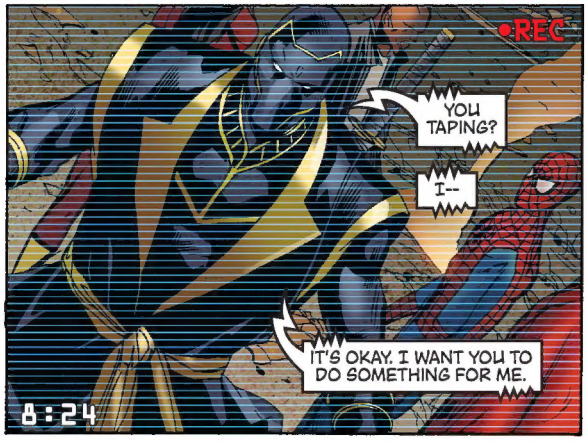
WHAT DO YOU PEOPLE USUALLY DO?

USUALLY WE HAND THEM OVER TO FIGURES OF AUTHORITY...

BUT--BEING AS WE ARE MORE WANTED THAN THEM... AND THEY ARE IN CAHOOTS WITH--

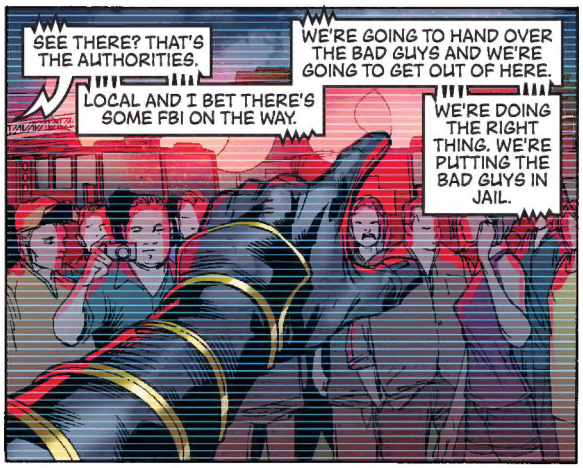
I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO.

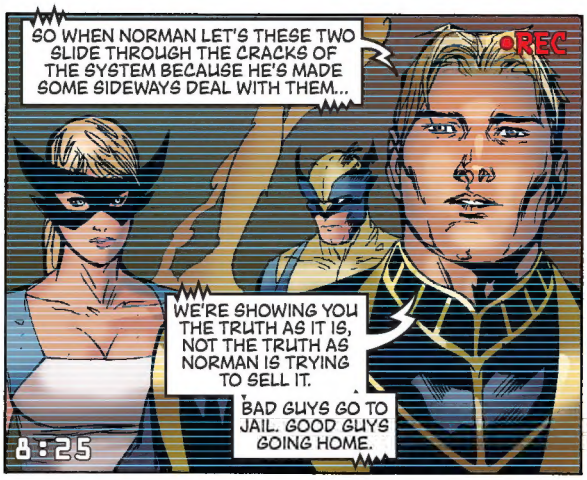
YOU.

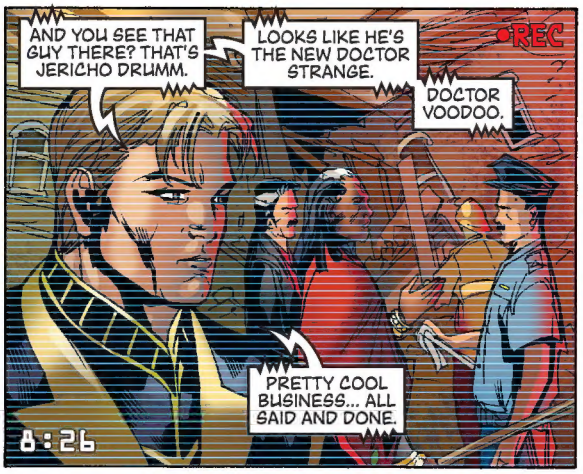

REC
YOU TAPING?
I--
IT'S OKAY. I WANT YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME.
8:24

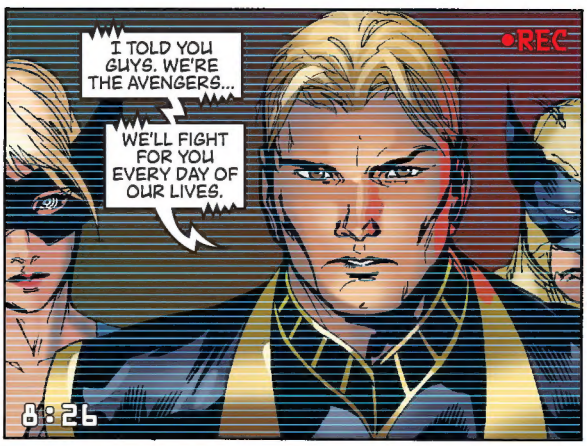
OKAY, LISTEN, I'M CLINT BARTON.
WE'RE HERE IN NEW ORLEANS. WE JUST HELPED DOCTOR STRANGE TAKE DOWN THE CRIMINAL KNOWN AS THE HOOD.
WE KNOW FOR A FACT THE HOOD IS WORKING IN CAHOOTS WITH NORMAN OSBORN. WE KNOW IT.

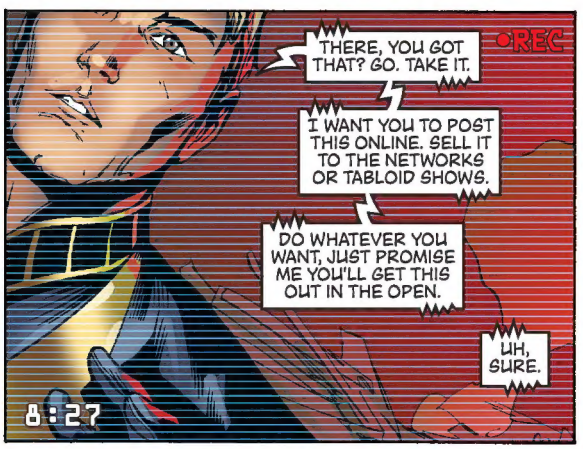
AND THAT-- IS THE KNOWN TERRORIST KNOWN AS MADAME MASQUE.
REC
WE CAUGHT THEM ON A RAMPAGE AND WE TOOK THEM DOWN.
8:24


SEE THERE? THAT'S THE AUTHORITIES.
WE'RE GOING TO HAND OVER THE BAD GUYS AND WE'RE GOING TO GET OUT OF HERE.
LOCAL AND I BET THERE'S SOME FBI ON THE WAY.
WE'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING. WE'RE PUTTING THE BAD GUYS IN JAIL.


SO WHEN NORMAN LET'S THESE TWO SLIDE THROUGH THE CRACKS OF THE SYSTEM BECAUSE HE'S MADE SOME SIDEWAYS DEAL WITH THEM...
REC
WE'RE SHOWING YOU THE TRUTH AS IT IS, NOT THE TRUTH AS NORMAN IS TRYING TO SELL IT.
BAD GUYS GO TO JAIL. GOOD GUYS GOING HOME.
8:25


AND YOU SEE THAT GUY THERE? THAT'S JERICHO DRUMM.
LOOKS LIKE HE'S THE NEW DOCTOR STRANGE.
REC
DOCTOR VOODOO.
PRETTY COOL BUSINESS... ALL SAID AND DONE.
8:26


I TOLD YOU GUYS. WE'RE THE AVENGERS...
REC
WE'LL FIGHT FOR YOU EVERY DAY OF OUR LIVES.
8:26


THERE, YOU GOT THAT? GO. TAKE IT.
REC
I WANT YOU TO POST THIS ONLINE. SELL IT TO THE NETWORKS OR TABLOID SHOWS.
DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, JUST PROMISE ME YOU'LL GET THIS OUT IN THE OPEN.
UH, SURE.
8:27

24 HOURS LATER.
PARKER...
SO CLOSE TO GREATNESS. SO CLOSE TO TRUE POWER.
I, LOKI, SCION OF ODIN, PRINCE OF ASGARD...
I WAS COUNTING ON YOU FOR THE TIME OF NORMAN OSBORN'S FALL.
BUT NOW LOOK AT YOU... YOU'RE NO GOOD TO ME NOW.
PARKER... WOULD YOU LIKE A SECOND CHANCE?
PLEASE...

BROOKLYN, MIDNIGHT
YES, HAWKEYE. WHAT'S FUNNY ABOUT CLINT BARTON'S ACCUSATION OF ME...
...IS THAT WHEN HE FIRST JOINED THE AVENGERS, WAY BACK WHEN, IT WAS QUITE A CONTROVERSY.
SOME PROBABLY DON'T REMEMBER, BUT HE *WAS* A CONVICTED FELON.
AND HE JOINED THE TEAM WITH TWO MUTANTS WHO WERE KNOWN *TERRORISTS.*
REFORMED TERRORISTS, YES, BUT TERRORISTS.
THE CHILDREN OF MAGNETO. THE MUTANT TERRORIST.
BUT *HE* WAS GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE IN LIFE AND WITH THAT SECOND CHANCE HE SERVED THIS NATION AND THE WORLD.
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE
HAWKEYE'S FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE AS HERO
LIVE 4:20
MENBS
WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE GLORY DAYS OF THE AVENGERS, ONE THINKS OF CLINT BARTON...
BUT SHOULD WE JUDGE HIM FOR HIS PAST EVEN THOUGH HE PAID HIS DUES?
NORMAN OSBORN
NORMAN OSBORN REFUTES CRITICS
LIVE 4:21
MENBS
OBVIOUSLY, THOUGH, HE DOESN'T THINK MUCH OF *ME.*
BUT I WONDER, A MAN LIKE THAT, WHAT HE HAS BEEN THROUGH...
WATCHING CAPTAIN AMERICA DIE, TONY STARK FAIL *SO* BADLY, THOR..
WATCHING *HIS* FAMILY FALL APART AND HAVING TO WATCH *MY* FAMILY BUILD ITSELF UP...
IT MUST BE HARD.
AND WHO KNOWS WHAT KIND OF TRAUMA A MAN LIKE THAT HAS BEEN THROUGH, DEATHS AND NEAR-DEATHS...
WHAT DO YOU THINK IT *DOES* TO A MAN AFTER A WHILE? LIKE A PRIZEFIGHTER. NO MATTER HOW GREAT...
I MEAN, WHAT IS HE DOING NOW? HIDING IN THE SHADOWS? CONCOCTING CONSPIRACIES?
A MAN LIKE *THAT?* IT'S SO SAD.
I SAW THAT INTERVIEW. IT FELT LIKE A CRY FOR HELP.
AND *I* WOULD HELP HIM. ABSOLUTELY!
NORMAN OSBORN
FACTOID: CLINT BARTON WAS GOLIATH.
LIVE 4:23
MENBS
I WANT TO FIND HIM AND BRING HIM IN, IF ONLY TO HELP HIM BEFORE HE HURTS HIMSELF.
BABY, YOU STARTED IT.
WHAT DID YOU THINK HE WAS GOING TO DO?
I THOUGHT-- I THOUGHT I'D RATTLE HIM.
I THOUGHT THE MEDIA WOULD GO AFTER HIM.
BUT THEY DIDN'T...

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO KILL HIM.
TO BE CONTINUED...